

The Spectrum of Food Choices

Foods are neither good nor bad, but some are more healthful for you than others. You have a spectrum of choices. Based on the latest science, while recognizing the limitations of research, I have categorized foods into a spectrum ranging from the most healthful (Group 1) to the least healthful (Group 5).

Group 1

Group 1 foods are predominantly fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, soy products, nonfat dairy, and egg whites in their natural forms, as well as some good fats that contain omega 3 fatty acids. These are the foods that are rich in good carbs, good fats, good proteins and other protective substances. There are at least 100,000 substances in these foods that have powerful anti cancer, anti-heart-disease and anti-aging properties.

Group 2

Group 2 foods are also predominantly plant-based but somewhat higher in fat (predominantly monosaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat) such as avocados, seeds, nuts. Oils are included but in small amounts, since they are so dense in calories. Canola oil is a better choice than olive oil, as previously described, since canola oil contains some of the good omega 3 fatty acids and a better ratio of omega 6 fatty acids to omega 3 fatty acids than olive oil. Group 2 also includes foods canned in water (rather than sugary syrup), canned vegetables (if sodium is not too high), low-fat dairy (1 percent), decaffeinated beverages, low-sodium soy sauce, and so on.

Group 3

Group 3 foods include some seafood, some refined carbohydrates and concentrated sweeteners (in moderation), some oils that are higher in saturated fat, oils that have a higher ratio of omega 6 fatty acids to omega 3 fatty acids, some reduced fat (2 percent) dairy products, margarines free of trans fatty acids, sweeteners containing high fructose corn syrup, and higher sodium.

Group 4

Group 4 foods contain additional fat, higher fat animal protein and fewer protective nutrients. These include poultry, fish that are higher in mercury, whole milk/dairy products, margarine, mayonnaise, doughnuts, fried rice, pastries, cakes, cookies, and pies.

Group 5

Group 5 foods are, in general, the least healthful foods. They are the lowest in protective substances and are highest in “bad fats” (especially trans fatty acids and saturated fat). Group 5 foods include red meat in its various forms, egg yolks, fried poultry, fried fish, hot dogs, organ meats, butter, cream, and tropical oils.